

Message Text

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EXDIS

DEPT PASS DEFENSE AND OTHER ADDRESSEES AS APPROPRIATE
INCLUDING DEP ASST SECY DEFENSE BERGOLD IN MADRID

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SUBJECT: US-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS - MILITARY FACILITIES

REF: ATHENS 1196

1. AFTER A SLOW START, CAUSED PRINCIPALLY BY LACK OF CLEAR GUIDELINES AND PREPARATION ON THE GREEK SIDE, OUR TALKS ABOUT BILATERAL MILITARY AGREEMENTS AND US FACILITIES IN GREECE ARE BEGINNING TO COME INTO FOCUS. THE FEB 12 MEETING (REFTEL) PROVIDED CLEAR INSIGHTS INTO WHAT THE GREEKS REGARD AS KEY PROBLEM AREAS. AS THE GREEK SIDE INDICATED, THE COMPLAINTS THEY ARTICULATED YESTERDAY MAY BE SUPPLEMENTED BY OTHERS AS THE DISCUSSIONS PROCEED, BUT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT AT THIS STAGE THAT GREEK DISCOMFORT IS MORE POLITICAL THAN FUNCTIONAL AND THAT THE US FACILITIES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES WHICH TROUBLE THEM MOST ARE, PARADOXICALLY, THOSE WHICH (A) ARE MOST CONSPICUOUS AND (B) LEAST CONSPICUOUS.

2. THUS US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON (ATHENAI) AIR FIELD, ELEFSIS AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, SOUDHA CREATE PROBLEMS FOR THE GREEK GOVT BECAUSE THEY ARE PROMINENT AND WELL PUBLICIZED INSTALLATIONS, TWO OF WHICH ARE LOCATED IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF METROPOLITAN ATHENS. THE GREEK NEGOTIATOR STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT THE GOG

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INTENDS TO REASSERT ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER HELLENIKON AND THE

SITE OF ELEFSIS, TERMINATING HOMEPORTING IN THE PROCESS. THE DISCUSSIONS SEEMED TO INDICATE ROOM FOR COMPROMISE ON HELLENIKON, BUT THE GREEKS WERE NOT PARTICULARLY RESPONSIVE ON HOMEPORTING, ALTHOUGH THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SIXTH FLEET'S PRESENCE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. IN THE CASE OF INCONSPICUOUS, INDEED VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN, FACILITIES OPERATED BY THE US IN GREECE, SUCH AS THE DTS COMMUNICATIONS SITE AT TATOI, THE PROBLEM FOR THE GREEKS IS REVERSED. THAT IS, IT IS THE DISCREET NATURE OF THESE FACILITIES AND THE LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THEM WITHIN THE GREEK GOVT WHICH MAKES GREEK OFFICIALS UNCOMFORTABLE.

3. CHARACTERIZING THE GREEK SENSITIVITIES IN THIS WAY SUGGESTS TWO LINES OF POSSIBLE COMPROMISE. AS FAR AS HELLENIKON IS CONCERNED, WE BELIEVE THERE IS A FAIR CHANCE THAT THE GREEK GOVT CAN BE CONVINCED THAT US FACILITIES THERE, AT LEAST IN PART, SERVE THEIR DEFENSE NEEDS AND SHOULD BE RETAINED. IT WILL, HOWEVER, BE NECESSARY TO EXAMINE CAREFULLY WAYS IN WHICH MARGINAL SERVICES AT HELLENIKON CAN BE DISPERSED OR RELOCATED AND WAYS IN WHICH GREEK SOVEREIGNTY CAN AT LEAST NOMINALLY BE ASSERTED OVER THE FACILITY BY INCORPORATING IT INTO THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE BASE AT HELLENIKON. CONCERNED WASHINGTON AGENCIES SHOULD BEGIN PROMPTLY TO EXAMINE THIS PROBLEM SO THAT WE CAN FORMULATE SOME ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE GREEK PROBLEM WHICH DO NOT CREATE INTOLERABLE INCONVENIENCES FOR US. A SIMILAR APPROACH MAY BE POSSIBLE IN THE CASE OF SOUDHA, ALTHOUGH WE INFER THAT THE GREEKS ARE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT THE AMERICAN PROFILE OF SOUDHA THAN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PERSUADING US TO PAY SOMETHING FOR IT IN THE FORM OF EXPANDED HELLENIC AIR FORCE FACILITIES THERE. ALTHOUGH THE GREEKS WERE NOT ENCOURAGING ABOUT HOMEPORTING, WE BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO RETAIN USAGE RIGHTS AT THE ELEFSIS PIER FOR NON-HOMEPORTED UNITS OF THE SIXTH FLEET, ALTHOUGH THE HOMEPORTING ARRANGEMENT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE CONSIDERABLY REVISED OR REPLACED ENTIRELY.

4. REGARDING THE MOSAIC OF INCONSPICUOUS BUT IN MANY CASES IMPORTANT FACILITIES SUCH AS TATOI, WE BELIEVE
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THAT OUR APPROACH SHOULD BE DOUBLED PRONGED. ON THE ONE HAND, WE WILL HAVE TO SATISFY THE GREEKS THAT THE BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THESE FACILITIES, MOST OF WHICH ARE COMMUNICATIONS ASSETS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, DO NOT DEROGATE GREEK SOVEREIGNTY OR INVOLVE GREECE IN UN-ACCEPTABLE RISKS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS, AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, CONVINCE THEM THAT THE FACILITIES DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY SERVE GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS. THE GREEK OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE ARE

NEGOTIATING ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THESE FACILITIES IN PART BECAUSE THEY KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT THEM. IT SHOULD THEREFORE BE POSSIBLE TO SATISFY THE GREEK GOVT THAT THE FACILITIES SERVE A VALID PURPOSE AND ARE COVERED BY VALID AGREEMENTS WITHOUT OPENING THE DOORS WIDE OR DECLASSIFYING THE FACILITIES. IN MOST CASES IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PACIFY GREEK ANXIETIES BY MEANS OF SANITIZED BRIEFINGS AND BY VISITS TO THE INSTALLATIONS BY AUTHORIZED GREEK REPRESENTATIVES.

5. THE LATTER OBLIGATION IS ONE WHICH WE CANNOT AVOID AND SHOULD NOT TRY TO AVOID. WE EXPECT THAT THE GREEK SIDE WILL SOON REQUEST A TOUR OF US FACILITIES. THIS COULD COME WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS, DEPENDING UPON THE SENSE OF URGENCY FELT BY THE GREEKS. WE WILL NEED PROMPT CLEARANCES FROM WASHINGTON FROM THE AGENCIES CONCERNED TO THEIR MISSION COUNTERPARTS AUTHORIZING GUIDED TOURS AND BRIEFINGS WHEN REQUESTED. ANY DELAY IN RESPONDING TO A GREEK REQUEST WOULD EXACERBATE GREEK SUSPICIONS AND UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. FOR THIS REASON WE WILL NEED CONTINGENCY CLEARANCES TO CONDUCT GUIDED TOURS OF CERTAIN CLASSIFIED FACILITIES AND COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF THE MISSION EARLY NEXT WEEK WILL SEND MESSAGES IDENTIFYING THE FACILITIES WHICH WE THINK THE GREEKS WILL WANT TO SEE AND OUTLINING THE TYPE OF SANITIZED BRIEFING WE HAVE IN MIND.

6. AFTER THREE DAYS OF INTENSIVE TALKS, IT IS OUR TENTATIVE CONCLUSION THAT THE GREEKS WILL SEEK CHANGES IN OUR OPERATING RELATIONSHIP WHICH ARE MORE THAN COSMETIC BUT LESS THAN VITAL. IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT THE GREEK SIDE DOES NOT REPEAT NOT CHALLENGE THE BASIC ASSUMPTION THAT BILATERAL MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE

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US IS IMPORTANT FOR GREECE AND THAT, IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF OUR REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, AN EFFECTIVE US MILITARY ROLE IS POSITIVE AND STABILIZING. WE BELIEVE THAT ASSUMPTION UNDERLIES THE THINKING NOT ONLY OF THE GREEK NEGOTIATING TEAM BUT OF THE GREEK GOVT ITSELF. WITHOUT IT A TRUE MESHING OF OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. WITH IT THERE MAY STILL BE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF DETAIL BUT THE EVENTUAL CONCLUSION OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GREEKS WHOULD BE SATISFACTORY BOTH FOR US AND FOR THEM.

KUBISCH

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE AND OTHER ADDRESSEES.

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